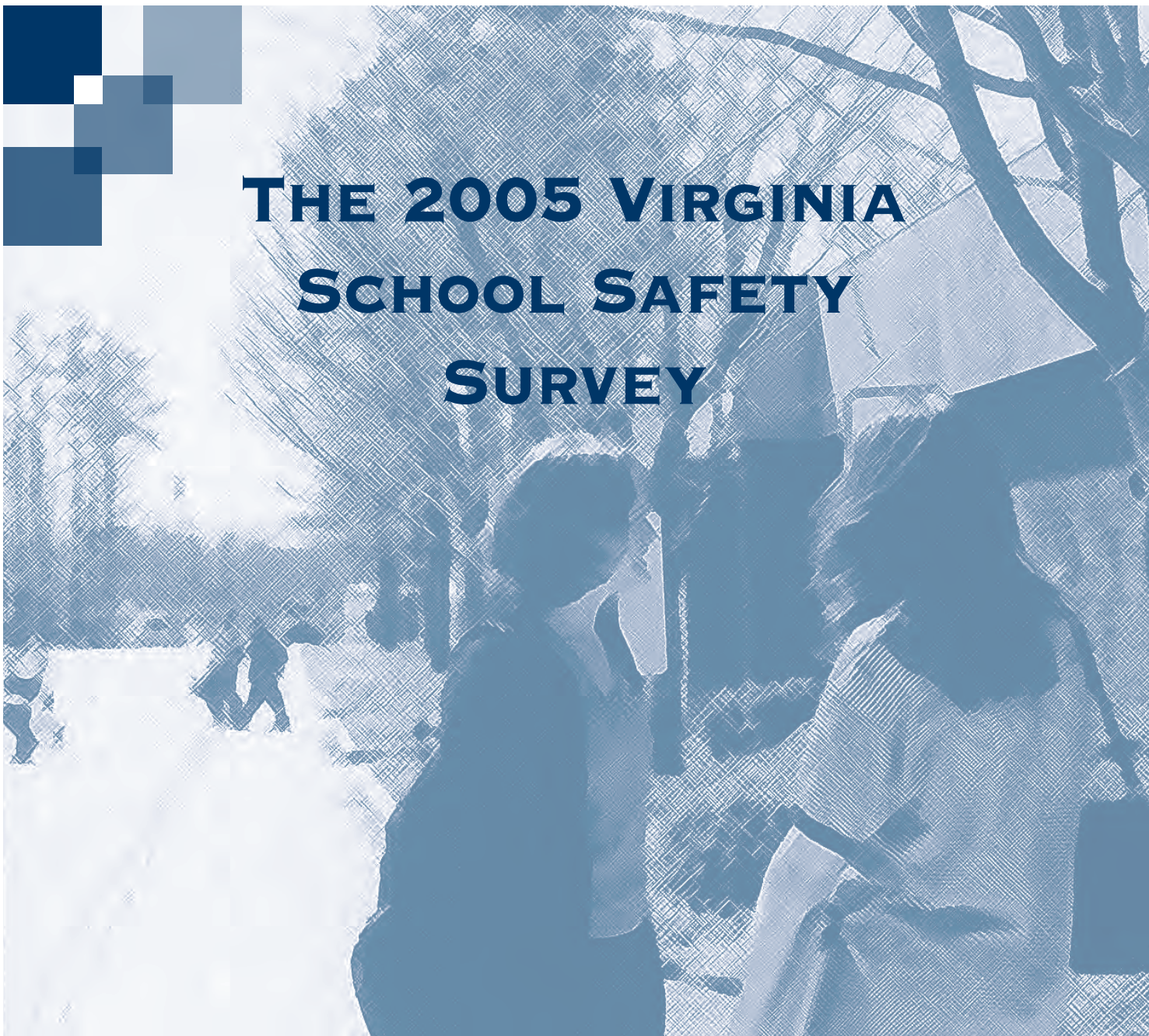




THE 2005 VIRGINIA SCHOOL SAFETY SURVEY



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES
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THE 2005 VIRGINIA SCHOOL SAFETY SURVEY RESULTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Starting in July 2000, the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and the Department of Education (DOE) shared the responsibility of the school safety audits. The DOE was tasked with developing guidelines for school safety audit content and procedure and the Virginia Center for School Safety (VCSS)¹ at DCJS with the analysis and dissemination of school safety audit data.

In 2003, the VCSS, with technical support from the Criminal Justice Research Center¹ conducted a study to review the status of school safety audit data in Virginia. The results of that study and its recommendations for modifications to the school safety audit process were published in August 2004. Subsequently, legislation enacted in July 2005² transferred the responsibility for school safety audits from the Department of Education to the Department of Criminal Justice Services. The Virginia Center for School Safety was given authority to prescribe standardized safety audit content and mandate a uniform reporting process.

As part of its continuing work toward revising the audit process, the VCSS and Criminal Justice Research Center developed and conducted an on-line school safety survey which allows schools and school divisions to meet their Code mandate to annually report safety audit data to the VCSS. This report presents the findings of the 2005 Virginia School Safety Survey.

Two versions of the survey were created: one “division-level survey” for school division superintendents, and one “school-level survey” for individual schools. The surveys were designed to collect information that reflects school safety concerns during the 2004 – 2005 school year and covers school safety-related topics, such as:

- safety-related policies and training,
- community collaboration,
- security, surveillance and monitoring, and
- student conduct and school climate.

Data were collected from a majority of Virginia public school divisions and schools. These data provide a baseline of information on current school safety planning and practices that will be used to guide future safety surveys and safety audit activities.

It should be noted that, although not all divisions and schools responded to the survey in time to have their information included in this first annual report, they have until the end of the 2005 – 2006 school year to respond and fulfill their reporting mandate. It is anticipated that survey data from all divisions and schools will be included in the 2006 school survey report.

Major Findings from the Division-level Survey:

- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of Virginia’s school divisions (103 of 132) responded to the safety survey; 29 divisions either have not responded to the survey or did not respond in time for inclusion in this report.
- Forty-two percent (42%) of Virginia school divisions made changes in their school safety-related policies within the last school year, by either adopting new policies or revising current ones on topics such as bullying, gangs, weapons, illegal drugs and reporting of criminal offenses.

¹ The Virginia Center for School Safety and the Criminal Justice Research Center are both centers that are located within the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

² *Virginia Code* §22.1-279.8

- Most divisions require their personnel to be trained to deal with safety-related issues such as child abuse/neglect, threats made by students, and suicidal students.
- Eighty-nine percent (89%) of divisions regularly communicate with local law enforcement about problems in and around the schools. Sixty percent (60%) of divisions share or review schools' annual Discipline, Crime, and Violence reports with local law enforcement.
- Sixty percent (60%) of school divisions have division-level volunteer programs in their schools. Further, 57% of divisions have a screening process for volunteers.
- Eighty-nine percent (89%) of school divisions use School Resource Officers (SROs) in some capacity to enhance school safety. These SROs are primarily funded and equipped by local law enforcement agencies.
- Twenty-seven percent (27%) of school divisions use School Security Officers (SSOs) to enhance school safety.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of divisions require that designated personnel and/or visitors wear visible ID badges while on school property.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of divisions require schools to have two-way communication between the main school office and classrooms and other areas of the school.
- Twenty-three percent (23%) of divisions require schools to monitor their main entrances during school hours, and 47% of divisions require schools to provide a "visible, regular security presence" during school hours.

Major Findings from the School-level Survey:

- Seventy-one percent (71%) of Virginia's schools (1,409 of 1,990) responded to the survey. The remaining 581 schools either have not responded to the survey or did not respond in time for inclusion into this report.
- Sixty percent (60%) of the responding schools identified themselves as elementary schools, 17% as middle schools, 15% as high schools, and 8% as "other" types of schools such as combined, alternative, vocational/technical, etc.
- Eighty-six percent (86%) of schools practice evacuation drills once a month during the school year. Eighty-three percent (83%) of schools practice lockdown drills at least one time during the school year.
- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of schools have regular meetings between school administrators and local law enforcement officials to discuss problems in and around the schools.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of schools have an organized volunteer program. Of these, 49% report screening volunteers prior to their working in the school.
- Eighty percent (80%) of schools monitor the main entrances of their school buildings during school hours. In just over half of these schools monitoring is performed by school personnel; in just under half by surveillance cameras.
- Ninety-six percent (96%) of schools have a two-way communication system between the main office and other areas of the school. Of these, half use an intercom system and one-third use a phone-based system.

- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of schools have regulations concerning visitors. Of these, most (99%) require visitors to sign in at the school office and about one-quarter (24%) require visitors to show a photo ID.
- Ninety-four percent (94%) of schools report having a “visible, regular security presence” during school hours. Who provides this security presence varies significantly between elementary, middle, and high schools.
- Uniformed law enforcement officers are the primary visible security presence at school-related events in the high schools.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of schools have written plans for notifying parents/guardians in the case of a school crisis or emergency. Of these, 86% use telephone notification.
- Eleven percent (11%) of schools reported identifying recognizable gangs/gang members among their student populations during the 2004 - 2005 school year. Of these schools, 43% are high schools and 58% are located in suburban settings.

Topics for Attention in the Upcoming Year:

The 2005 Virginia School Safety Survey was intended to provide baseline information that will be used to assist DCJS in developing recommendations for improvements. To that end, the VCSS will examine the following areas in more detail during the coming year to determine if they merit suggestions or recommendations for improvement:

- student tracking/parental notification systems used by schools in emergency situations,
- processes used by schools to screen volunteers working in the schools,
- incorporating homeland security issues in school safety plans, policies, and practices,
- evacuation and lockdown drills conducted by schools,
- controlling access to school buildings,
- sharing information between school divisions and law enforcement,
- communication within the schools, and
- school surveys of student safety concerns

II. INTRODUCTION

The 1997 General Assembly directed school boards to require all public schools to conduct safety audits (§22.1-279.8). The purpose of the audits was to assess the safety conditions in public schools, identify physical safety concerns and develop solutions to address them, and to identify any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events.

Since the initial 1997 legislation, the statutory language governing school safety audits has been modified in various ways, culminating in the transfer of oversight for school safety audits from the Department of Education (DOE) to the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). These modifications are summarized below.

- 1999:** §22.1-278.1 is amended to require that school safety audits be *written*, and each school is required to maintain a copy of the audit and make it available for review upon written request.
- 2000:** §9-173.21 creates the Virginia Center for School Safety (VCSS) within the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). The VCSS is charged to collect, analyze, and disseminate school safety data, including school safety audit information.
- 2001:** VCSS Code language is changed from §9-173.21 to §9.1-184, and school safety audit Code language is changed from §22.1-278.1 to §22.1-279.8. §9.1-184 is amended to state that VCSS shall collect, analyze, and disseminate school safety data, including school safety audit information, *submitted to it pursuant to §22.1-279.8*. Language in §22.1-279.8 is amended to require school divisions to submit school safety audit data to VCSS.
- 2003:** §22.1-279.8 is revised to require that school safety audit data be submitted to VCSS *annually*, rather than every three years as was stated in DOE guidelines.
- 2005:** §22.1-279.8 is revised to direct VCSS to prescribe a standard format for school safety audit reporting and procedures for report submission, which may include electronic submission.

To allow VCSS to meet its requirement to collect and analyze school safety audit data, DCJS worked closely with DOE to begin redesigning the school safety audit process. The first part of the redesign was to develop an automated, on-line process for schools and school divisions to electronically report school safety survey data to DCJS. The School Safety Audit Task Force, comprised of school and security officials from across Virginia, collaborated to modify the existing DOE protocol and develop the on-line process.

This report presents the findings of the 2005 Virginia School Safety Survey. The survey was designed to collect information that reflects conditions during the 2004-2005 school year and covers school safety-related topics, such as safety-related policies and training; community collaboration; security, surveillance and monitoring; and student conduct and school climate.

III. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Two versions of the on-line school safety survey were developed and administered for the VCSS by the DCJS Criminal Justice Research Center: one “division-level survey” to be completed by the division superintendent or his/her designee, and one “school-level survey” to be completed by the school principal or his/her designee. The information collected reflects conditions during the 2004 – 2005 school year. The surveys were conducted during July - September of 2005.

Information about both surveys was sent to each division superintendent. The superintendents were asked to respond to the division-level survey and were instructed to distribute the school-level survey information to each of the schools in their divisions.

The division-level survey was designed to gather information about safety related policies and practices that are administered at the division level and that generally apply to all schools within the division. The school-level survey was designed to gather information about safety-related policies and practices in the individual schools.

Response Rate

Response rate to division survey:

- Of 132 school divisions in Virginia, 103 divisions submitted division-level surveys. This is a response rate of 78%.

Response rates to school survey by schools and school divisions:

- Of 1,990 public schools in Virginia in school year 2004 – 2005, 1,409 (71%) submitted school-level surveys.
- These 1,409 schools represent 112 of Virginia’s 132 school divisions (85%). There were 20 divisions from which no school surveys were received.

IV. SURVEY OF VIRGINIA SCHOOL DIVISIONS

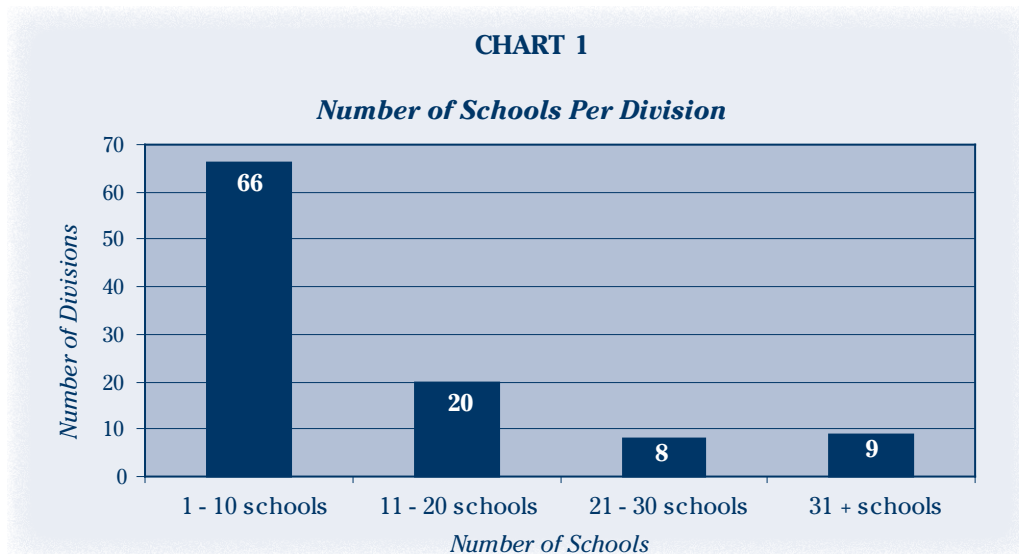
The division-level survey sought information about safety-related policies and practices. More specifically, the survey questions covered topic areas such as safety-related and disciplinary policy; crisis management plans; safety-related training and education; collaboration with outside agencies; volunteer programs; security, surveillance and monitoring; student code of conduct; and school climate.

Although a total of 103 divisions responded to the division-level survey, some divisions did not answer every question. The number of divisions that responded to each question is noted throughout this section.

This section of the report discusses the findings from divisions' responses. The information is categorized as follows: Safety-Related Policies and Training; Community Collaboration; Security, Surveillance, and Monitoring; and Student Conduct and School Climate.

Number of Schools per Division

The number of schools reported in each division ranges from 2 – 235. The average number of schools per division is 15.



SAFETY-RELATED POLICIES AND TRAINING

Divisions were asked whether they had adopted new or substantially amended safety-related policies in school year 2004 – 2005 and, if so, what types of policies were added or changed.

New or Amended Safety-Related Policies

Forty-two percent (42%, or 43 of 103) of school divisions said they had adopted new or substantially amended safety-related policies in school year 2004 – 2005.

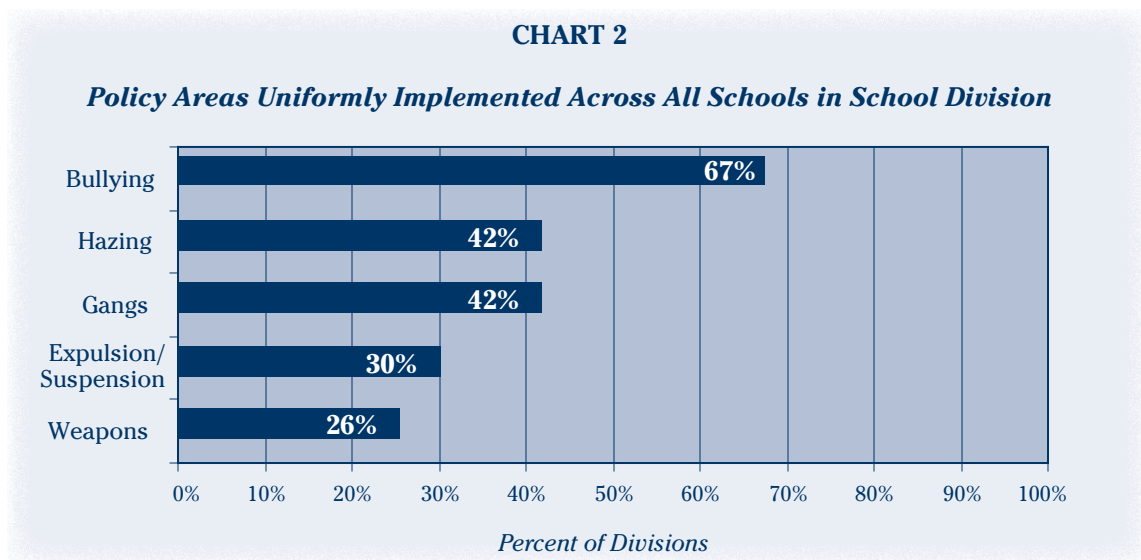
- The five most frequent newly adopted/substantially amended safety-related policies are noted in Table 1. (N = 43)

TABLE 1 <i>School Divisions that Adopted/Amended New Safety-Related Policies in School Year 2004 – 2005</i>		
<i>Safety-Related Policy Topic</i>	<i>Number of Divisions</i>	<i>Percent of Divisions</i>
Bullying	29	67%
Gang-related ³	18	42%
Hazing	18	42%
Expulsion/suspension	13	30%
Weapons	11	26%

Policy Implementation

School divisions were also asked which types of safety-related policies are uniformly implemented among all schools of the same type (elementary, middle, high, etc.).

- Chart 2 lists the five policy areas that are most often uniformly implemented across all schools in the school divisions. (N = 103)



Disciplinary Policies

Divisions were asked whether they impose specific minimum/maximum disciplinary actions for certain offenses.

- Eighty-seven percent (87%, or 89 of 102) of school divisions said they impose specific minimum/maximum disciplinary actions for certain offenses.

Virginia Code §22.1-277.07 allows school boards to establish and promulgate guidelines for determining whether “special circumstances” exist that would allow for no disciplinary action based on the facts of a particular situation. Divisions were asked whether they have established these guidelines for their schools.

- Eighty-one percent (81%, or 83 of 102) of school divisions said they have established such guidelines.

³ Gang-related policy may include specific dress code, graffiti, hand signs, etc.

Disciplinary Suspension Options

Divisions were asked about the types of suspension options available across all schools in their divisions:

- 97% (100 of 103) use out-of-school suspension (student released to parental supervision), and
- 87% (90 of 103) use an in-school suspension program.

Among alternative suspension programs:

- 50% of divisions (51 of 103) use a division-based out-of-school program,
- 46% (47 of 103) use a regional-based out-of-school program,
- 29% (30 of 103) use a school-based out-of-school program, and
- 20% (21 of 103) refer students to a non-profit organization.

Alternative Education Program for Drug Offense Expulsion:

- Eighty-one percent (81%, or 83 of 102) of school divisions said they have a policy that provides alternative education programs to students expelled for drug offenses for the term of the expulsion.

Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan (CMP/EMP)⁴

Divisions were asked whether or not they have developed written, coordinated, division-wide CMP/EMP, and if so what topics their CMP/EMP typically addressed.

- Ninety-three percent (93%, or 96 of 103 divisions) of school divisions report that they have written, coordinated, division-wide CMP/EMP.

Those divisions that have plans were asked about the specific topics addressed in their plans. Table 2 lists the topics and the percent of divisions that address them in their CMP/EMP. (N = 96)

TABLE 2	
<i>Content of Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan</i>	
<i>CMP/EMP Topics Addressed</i>	<i>Percent of Divisions</i>
Comprehensive multi-school evacuation	91%
Designation of public information officer	82%
Formal threat and vulnerability assessments	76%
Homeland security issues	58%
Medical triage coverage	53%
Electronic parental notification	18%

An important element of CMPs/EMPs is informing local law enforcement of the plan so that they are aware of each school's plan and building layout. Divisions were asked about their implementation of this element.

- Eighty-eight percent (88%, or 91 of 103) provide law enforcement with copies of each school's CMP/EMP. Of these 91 divisions, nearly all (97%, or 88 divisions) include floor plans for each school.

⁴ Division-level Crisis Management Plan is not required by Code.

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help first responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines coordinate more effectively in response to natural disasters and emergencies.

Just over half of the divisions (54%, or 56 of 103) report being aware of the National Incident Management System. Of these, about half (30 divisions) require their schools to incorporate NIMS key components into their CMP/EMP.

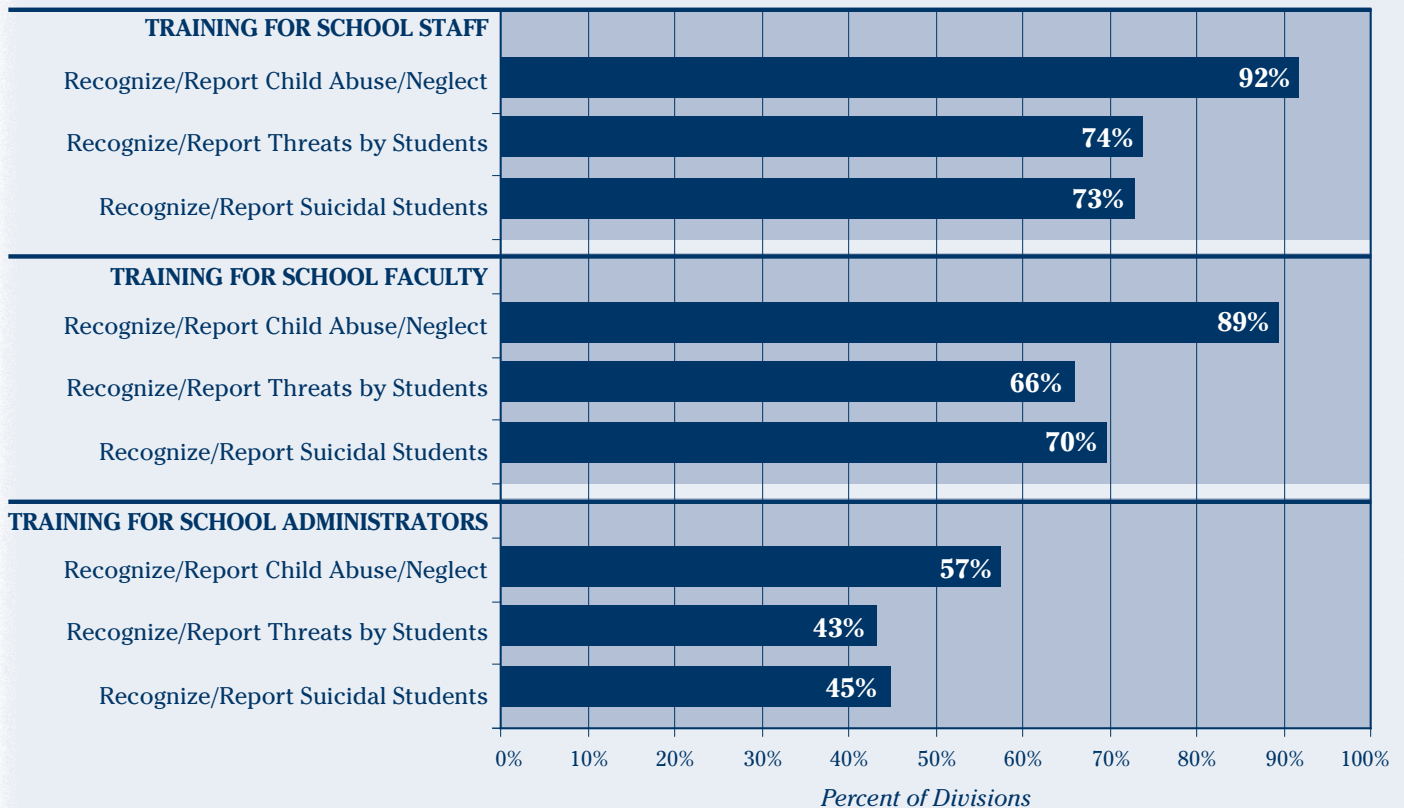
Training and Education

Divisions were asked about the specific types of safety-related training they require their school administrators, faculty, and staff to receive.

The three types of training most often required are listed below by group, along with the percent of divisions that require each type of training. Among all three groups, recognizing and reporting child abuse/neglect was the most frequently cited required training. (N = 103)

CHART 3

Safety-Related Training Required by School Divisions



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

School divisions were asked about the relationships they have with outside agencies and groups. The survey included questions about the types of cooperative agreements made with outside agencies; communication with local law enforcement agencies; division-wide volunteer programs and the screening of potential volunteers.

Cooperative Agreements

- Sixty-seven percent (67%, or 68 of 102) of school divisions report that cooperative agreements made with outside agencies are made exclusively at the division level.
- Twenty-seven percent of (27%, or 27 of 102) school divisions report that the agreements are made both at the division level and by individual schools.

The outside agency that most often partners with the school divisions is local law enforcement.

- Eighty-two percent (82%, or 78 of 95) of school divisions reported having a written cooperative agreement with a law enforcement agency.

The most common format used for these agreements is a Memorandum of Understanding/ Memorandum of Agreement (MOU/MOA) document.

Information Sharing with Law Enforcement

School divisions were asked about the types and frequency of communications they have with their local law enforcement agencies.

Frequency of communication with law enforcement:

- Many school divisions (89%, or 92 of 103) report that they have a process in place to regularly communicate/meet with local law enforcement to discuss problems in and around the schools. Nearly half of these divisions report that these communications/meetings occur at least once a month.

Review school Discipline, Crime, and Violence reports with local law enforcement:

- Sixty percent (60%, or 62 of 103) of school divisions report that they share/review their schools' Discipline, Crime, and Violence reports with law enforcement.

Receipt of local crime data reports:

- Just over half of school divisions (52%, or 53 of 103) regularly receive local crime data reports from local law enforcement. These reports help the divisions maintain awareness of crimes occurring in areas near their schools. Of these, 20 divisions said they receive such reports at least once a month.

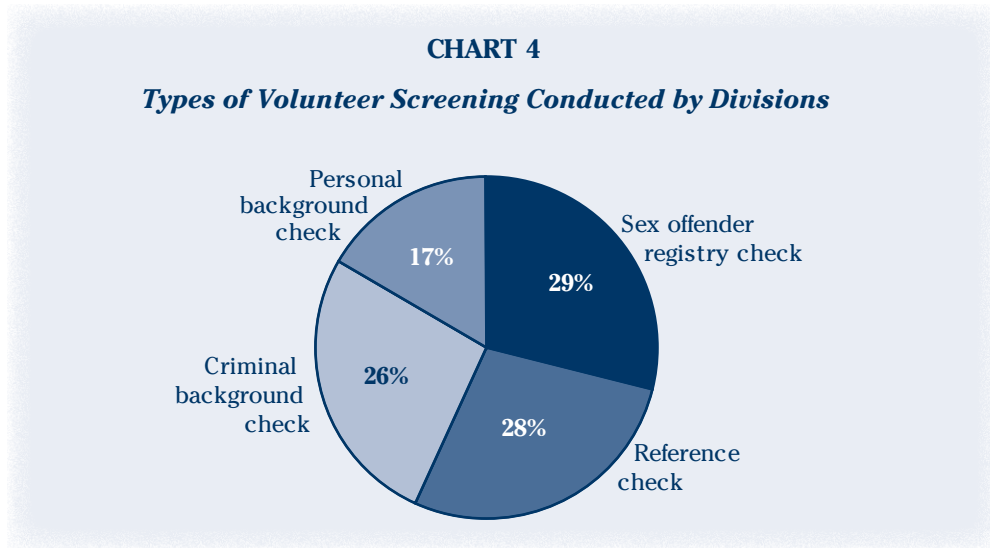
Volunteer Programs

Sixty-one percent (61%, or 62 of 102) of school divisions report having a division-level volunteer program. Of these, 95% use parent volunteers, and more than 70% use other types of volunteers such as business and community group volunteers.

Screening Volunteers:

Fifty-seven percent (57%, or 58 of 103) of school divisions subject their school volunteers to a screening process before allowing them to work in the schools.

The types of screening conducted by these 58 divisions include:



SECURITY, SURVEILLANCE, AND MONITORING

School divisions were asked about security and monitoring practices in their schools. These questions covered topics such as the types of security personnel, methods of controlling access to schools and school property, and the types of surveillance used.

Security Personnel

School Resource Officers (SROs)⁵

Eighty-nine percent (89%, or 92 of 103) of school divisions use School Resource Officers to enhance safety and security in their schools.

Number of SROs per division:

- The number of SRO positions assigned to all schools per division in school year 2004 – 2005 ranged from 1 – 49. The average was 4.7 per division.

SROs in high schools and middle schools:

- Most divisions (95%, or 87 of 92) use SROs in their high schools; 78% (72 of 92) use SROs in their middle schools.

Full-time SRO assignments:

- Fifty-three percent (53%, or 49 of 103) of divisions have SROs assigned full-time to one school.
- Thirty-six percent (36%, or 33 of 103) of divisions have SROs assigned full-time to multiple schools.

SRO assignment to schools:

- Fifty-one percent (51%, or 47 of 92) of divisions have SRO assignments made by the local law enforcement agency.

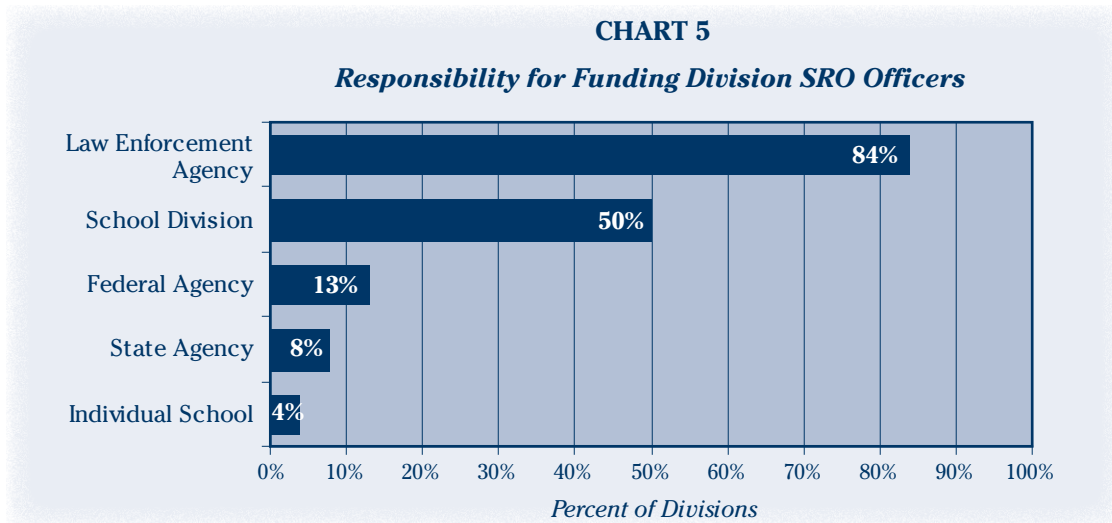
⁵ Per §9.1-101: "School Resource Officer" means a certified law enforcement officer hired by the local law enforcement agency to provide law enforcement and security services to Virginia public elementary and secondary schools.

- Thirty-seven percent (37%, or 34 of 92) of divisions have SRO assignments made by a combination of local law enforcement, division administration, and the schools.
- Twelve percent (12%, or 11 of 92) of divisions have SRO assignments made by division administration.

Roles and responsibilities of SROs:

- Nearly all school divisions (98%, or 90 of 92) have input in determining the roles and responsibilities of the SROs working in their division's schools.

As shown in Chart 5, local law enforcement agencies and school divisions primarily handle responsibility for funding and equipping the SRO positions. (N = 92)



Use of other (non-SRO) law enforcement personnel:

- Fifty-four percent (54%, or 56 of 103) of school divisions use other (non-SRO) personnel from local law enforcement agencies to enhance safety and security measures in their schools.

School Security Officers (SSOs)⁶

Twenty-seven percent (27%, or 28 of 103) of school divisions use School Security Officers (SSOs) to enhance safety and security in their schools.

- The number of SSO positions assigned to all schools per division in school year 2004 – 2005 ranged from 1 – 150. The average was 20.7; the median was 5.
- Twenty-eight divisions (100%) use SSOs in their high schools, 19 divisions (68%) use SSOs in their middle schools, and 5 divisions (18%) use SSOs in their elementary schools.

Access Control

Divisions were asked about the types of access control they have established division-wide.

⁶ Per §9.1-101: "School Security Officer" means an individual who is employed by the local school board for the singular purpose of maintaining order and discipline, preventing crime, investigating violations of school board policies, and detaining students violating the law or school board policies on school property or at school-sponsored events and who is responsible solely for ensuring the safety, security, and welfare of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors in the assigned school.

Controlling Building Access

- Nearly all school divisions (96%, or 99 of 103) require that each school have a designated point of entry. Of these, 84% of divisions (82 of 98) require schools to monitor their entry points to control building access.
- Thirteen percent (13%, or 13 of 103) of divisions require that their schools use electronic or mechanical access control equipment (for example, card key access system) to control/monitor access to school buildings.

After-hour Access to School Building

- Fifty-nine percent (59%, or 60 of 102) of divisions require their schools to have written regulations regarding access to/use of the school buildings by faculty and staff after regular school hours.

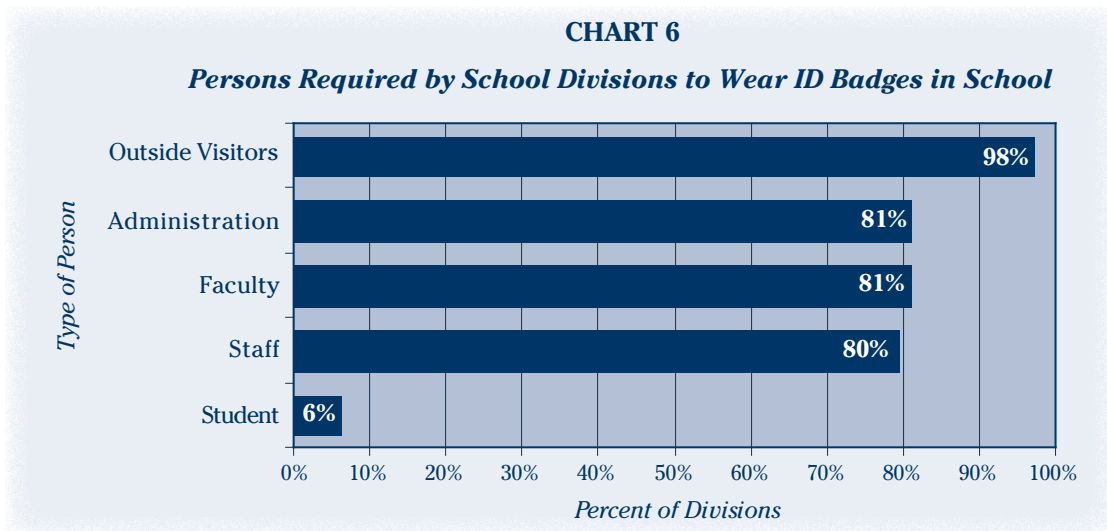
School Visitors

- Eighty-seven percent (87%, or 90 of 103) of divisions require their schools to have written regulations regarding visitors during normal school hours (visitors include parents, delivery personnel, etc.).

ID Badges

- Eighty-five percent (85%, or 88 of 103) of divisions require specified persons to wear visible school-issued ID badges or tags while on school property.

Chart 6 shows the percent of these divisions that require each type of person to wear visible school-issued ID badges or tags while on school property.



Security and Surveillance

Divisions reported information about various security and surveillance methods employed in their schools.

Two-way communication

Eighty-four percent (84%, or 86 of 103) of divisions require that each school have a two-way communication system in place between the main office and other areas of the school (including classrooms).

Remote classrooms

Eighty percent (80%, or 82 of 103) of divisions report that they have schools that use remote classrooms (i.e., trailers, modular units separate from the main school building, etc.) Of these, about half (53%, or 43 divisions) specify how schools should monitor their remote classrooms for security purposes.

Numbering exits and entrances

Twenty-one percent (21%, or 21 of 102) of divisions require their schools to clearly number all building exits and entrances with numbers that are at least 12" high.

Visible and Regular Security Presence

School divisions were asked whether they require their schools to provide a visible and regular security presence. Their responses are listed below.

- Forty-seven percent (47%, or 48 of 102) of divisions require security for school campuses during school hours.
- Sixty-two percent (62%, or 63 of 102) of divisions require a security presence at school-related events.
- Fourteen percent (14%, or 14 of 103) of divisions require security for school grounds after school hours.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

Student Code of Conduct

Division-Level Administration of the Student Code of Conduct

School divisions were asked how they administer the student code of conduct.

- Eighty-five percent (85%, or 87 of 102) have a mandatory, division-wide, uniform student code of conduct that their schools are required to use,
- 12% (12 of 102) provide a model student code of conduct for their schools to use, and
- 3% (3 of 102) allow schools to construct their own student codes of conduct.

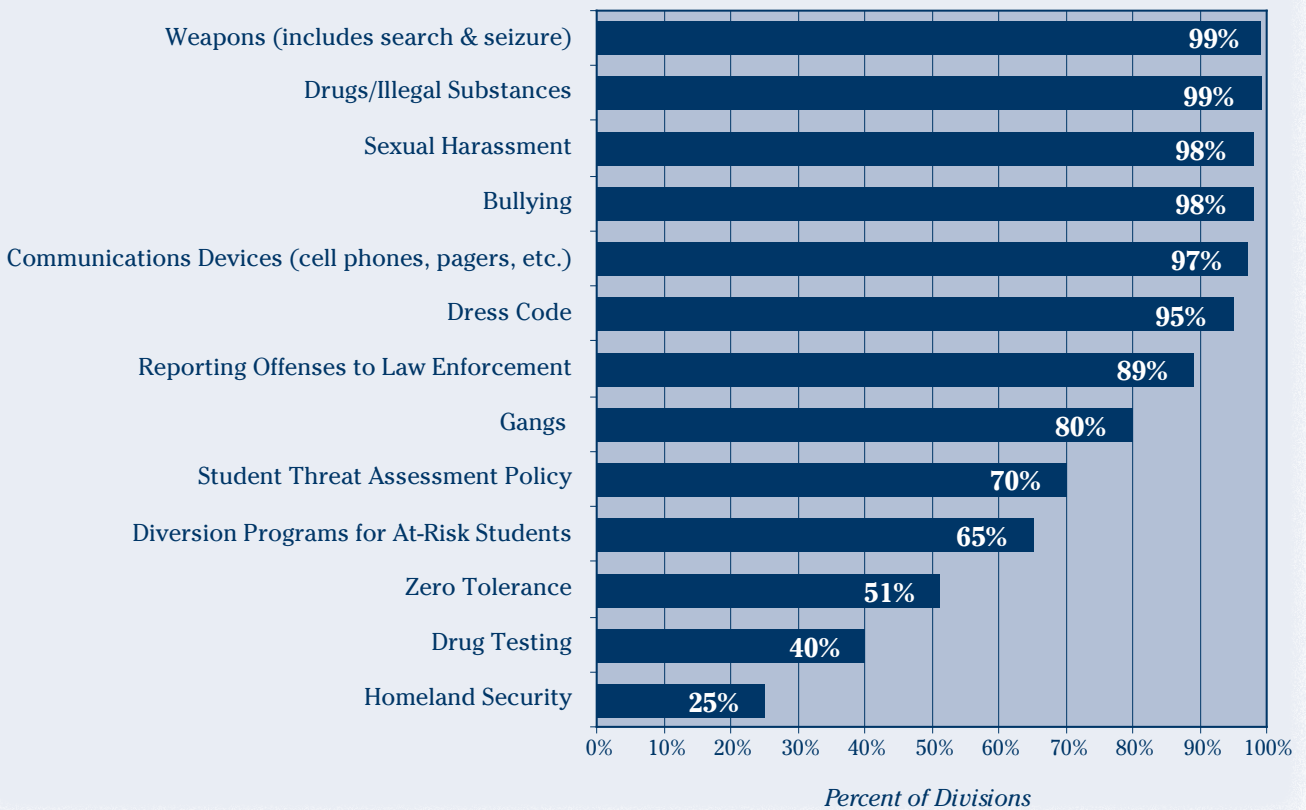
Review and Revision of the Student Code of Conduct

Most of the school divisions (95%, or 94 of 99) use either a division-wide, uniform student code of conduct or provide a model student code of conduct review and/or revise their student codes of conduct every year.

Content of the Student Code of Conduct

School divisions were asked about the content of their student codes of conduct. Chart 7 lists topics often included in student codes and shows the percent of school divisions that include the topic. (N = 103)

CHART 7

Topics in Division Student Code of Conduct**School Climate**

School divisions were asked whether they use anonymous reporting methods for students to report problems/potential dangers to school administrators. They were also asked about their use of formal threat assessments as a guide in their response to threats of violence by students.

Anonymous Reporting

Half of the school divisions (50%, or 51 of 102) have established a specific, division-wide procedure for students to anonymously report problems/potential dangers to school administrators. Of the 51 divisions:

- 63% (32 of 51) use a law enforcement-based program (e.g., Crime Stoppers),
- 55% (28 of 51) use a written submission method (such as a drop-box),
- 55% (28 of 51) use a telephone hotline, and
- 18% (9 of 51) use an on-line submission system.

Formal Threat Assessment

Sixty-four percent (64%, or 66 of 103) of school divisions report that they have established a division-wide, formal threat assessment process to respond to threats of violence by students.

V. SURVEY OF VIRGINIA SCHOOLS

The school-level survey asked about safety-related policies and practices. More specifically, the survey questions covered topic areas such as safety-related and disciplinary policy; crisis management plans; safety-related training and education; collaboration with outside agencies; volunteer programs; security, surveillance and monitoring; student code of conduct; and school climate.

Although a total of 1,409 schools responded to the survey, some schools did not answer every question. The number of schools that responded to each question is noted throughout this section.

This section of the report discusses the survey's findings. The information is categorized as follows: Description of the Schools; Safety-Related Policies and Training; Community Collaboration; Security, Surveillance, and Monitoring; and Student Conduct and School Climate.

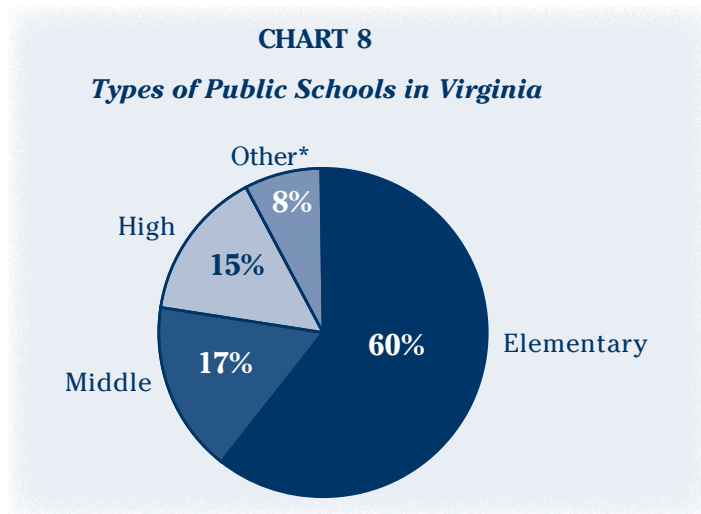
DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOLS

To give context to the data received from the schools, certain descriptive information was collected. Schools were asked to identify:

- the type of school (elementary, middle, high, etc.),
- the grades taught at the school,
- the number of students enrolled, and
- the type of setting in which the school is located (urban, suburban, rural, etc.).

Type of Schools

Chart 8 shows the principal types of schools that responded to the survey. More than half identify themselves as elementary schools. (N = 1,409)



* Other includes: combined, career/technical/vocational, alternative, special education, pre-kindergarten/preschool/early childhood, governor's, charter, correctional, adult education, primary, and magnet.

Alternative Schools

There were 23 schools that identified themselves as alternative schools. Of those, 54% of the schools (12 of 22) described their primary function as "disciplinary."

Student Population Size⁷

Schools were asked how many students were enrolled for the 2004 - 2005 school year. As seen in Table 3, the enrollment increases dramatically from elementary to secondary schools. (N = 1,400)

TABLE 3 Student Population Size, by Percent of Schools				
Student Population Size	Percent of Schools			
	Elem	Middle	High	Other*
0 – 250	14%	4%	4%	47%
251 – 500	44%	19%	19%	34%
501 – 750	33%	26%	12%	10%
751 – 1000	10%	25%	9%	4%
1001 – 1250	<1%	20%	13%	<1%
1251 – 1500	<1%	5%	13%	0
1501 – 1750	0	<1%	10%	0
1751 – 2000	0	<1%	7%	0
Over 2000	0	0	12%	4%**
* Other includes: combined, career/technical/vocational, alternative, special education, pre-kindergarten/preschool/early childhood, governor's, charter, correctional, adult education, primary, and magnet				
**This percentage represents four schools that identified themselves as "combined" schools serving six or more grade levels.				

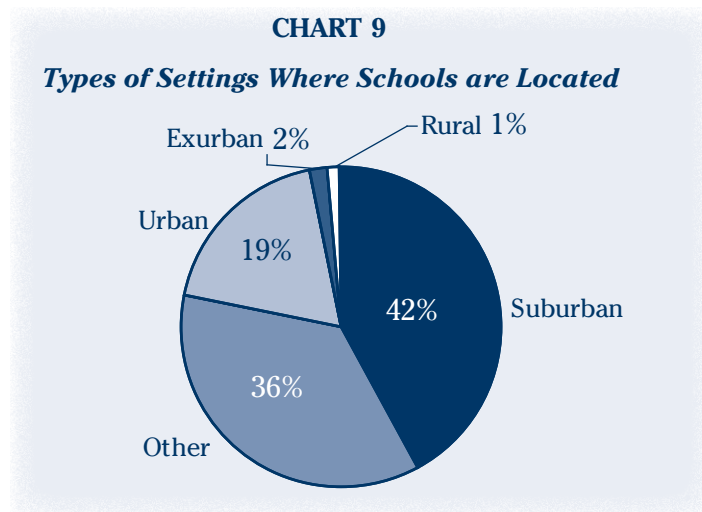
Other observations about student population size:

- Ninety-nine percent (99%) of all elementary schools have 1,000 or fewer students.
- Seventy-four percent (74%) of all middle schools have 1,000 or fewer students.
- Forty-four percent (44%) of all high schools have 1,000 or fewer students.

School Setting

Schools were asked to describe the areas in which they are located. This information is detailed in Chart 9. (N = 1,405)

- Nearly 78% of all schools are in suburban or rural settings.
- Less than 20% are in urban settings.



⁷ For purposes of this survey, it is important to note that DOE does not consider a school to be a school unless it has its own enrollment. Therefore, alternative schools, centers, and alternate educational sites that draw students from various schools or divisions, but do not have their own enrollment are considered a school for audit purposes even though it may be a separate physical structure. These students' enrollment remains with their school of origin.

SAFETY-RELATED POLICIES AND TRAINING

This section describes how Virginia schools plan and prepare for emergencies and other safety-related issues. It includes information about school policies, crisis management plans, practice drills, homeland security, and domestic preparedness.

School Safety Team⁸

A school safety team is a group, often made up of school administrators, faculty, staff, and local safety officials from law enforcement, EMS, and fire departments, that helps assess a school's overall safety. These assessments generally include: school buildings and grounds, policy/plan development and enforcement, risk prevention and intervention, opportunities for student, parent, and community involvement, role of law enforcement in the school, and staff development and training.

- Eighty-five percent (85%, or 1,189 of 1,405) of schools have a school safety team responsible for developing safety plans and practices. Of these, 7% (88 of 1,189) report having more than one safety team to accomplish these tasks.

Safety-Related Policies

Nearly all of the schools surveyed (99%, or 1,397 of 1,409) have some type of written safety-related policies in place.

Schools were asked to indicate which safety-related policies they have. The policies they cited are listed in Table 4 from the most prevalent to the least prevalent. There are some slight differences in the frequency of certain policies when comparing elementary schools and secondary schools. (N = 1,409)

TABLE 4 <i>Safety-Related Policies, by Type of School</i>					
<i>Type of Policy</i>	<i>Type of School</i>				
	<i>Elem</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Other*</i>	<i>All</i>
Drug/illegal substance	94%	99%	99%	92%	95%
Dress code	92%	99%	99%	90%	94%
Sexual harassment	91%	99%	97%	95%	94%
Weapons (including search and seizure)	92%	97%	99%	89%	94%
Bullying	94%	96%	93%	86%	94%
Communication devices	88%	98%	98%	91%	91%
Reporting status of criminal offenses to law enforcement	74%	76%	85%	77%	76%
Student threat assessment	72%	75%	74%	70%	73%
Gang-related	58%	73%	78%	69%	65%
Diversion (at-risk referral programs)	59%	61%	71%	62%	61%
Zero tolerance	60%	59%	65%	58%	60%
Drug testing	35%	40%	43%	40%	37%
Homeland security	34%	31%	29%	32%	33%
*Other includes: combined, career/technical/vocational, alternative, special education, pre-kindergarten/preschool/early childhood, governor's, charter, correctional, adult education, primary, and magnet					

⁸ Establishing a school safety team is not mandated by Code.

Schools that reported having certain types of safety-related policies were asked detailed questions about those policies.

Drug Policy

Ninety-five percent (95%, or 1,341 of 1,409) of schools have written policies regarding drugs. These policies cover both legal (prescription and over-the-counter drugs) and illegal drugs.

Of these schools, most have policies concerning legal drugs (prescription/over-the-counter):

- 97% (1,295 of 1,341) address procedures used by the school nurse to dispense drugs,
- 95% (1,272 of 1,341) address storage of student prescription drugs on school property, and
- 92% (1,235 of 1,341) address storage of student over-the-counter drugs on school property (if possession by student not permitted).

The schools also have policies concerning illegal drugs:

- 77% (1,034 of 1,341) address drug search and seizure protocols,
- 71% (947 of 1,341) address referrals for students/staff with identified drug/alcohol problems,
- 65% (874 of 1,341) address agencies/programs used for drug or alcohol referrals, and
- 49% (661 of 1,341) address temporary storage of seized illegal drugs on school property (until taken into custody by law enforcement).

Weapons Policy

Ninety-four percent (94%, or 1,318 of 1,409) of the schools have weapons policies. Of these schools:

- 98% (1,285) define what is considered a “weapon,”
- 86% (1,130) address weapon search and seizure protocols, and
- 51% (669) address protocols for storing seized weapons on school property until taken into custody by law enforcement.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Forty percent (40%, or 562 of 1,409) of the schools have some type of zero tolerance policy. Of these:

- 97% (817) address firearms,
- 94% (795) address illegal drugs/controlled substances,
- 89% (755) address edged (cutting) weapons,
- 89% (754) address alcohol, and
- 75% (631) address all drugs (including prescription and over-the-counter drugs).

Sexual Harassment Policy

Ninety-four percent (94%, or 1,321 of 1,409) of the schools have sexual harassment policies. Of these:

- 98% (1,288) address student-to-student sexual harassment,
- 89% (1,174) address faculty/staff-to-student sexual harassment,
- 86% (1,137) address student-to-faculty/staff sexual harassment, and
- 86% (1,140) address faculty/staff-to-faculty/staff sexual harassment.

Additionally, 54% (701 of 1,299) of the schools that have sexual harassment policies report that their policies identify the difference between sexual battery (criminal) and sexual harassment (non-criminal).

Bullying Policy

Ninety-four percent (94%, or 1,317 of 1,409) of the schools have bullying policies. Most (1,315 of 1,317) define certain terms in their bullying policies:

- 87% define specific forms of bullying (i.e., physical, emotional, verbal, electronic, cyber, etc.),
- 78% define the term “harassment” in regard to bullying, and
- 63% define the term “intimidation” in regard to bullying.

Policy for Reporting Neglect/Abuse/Suicide

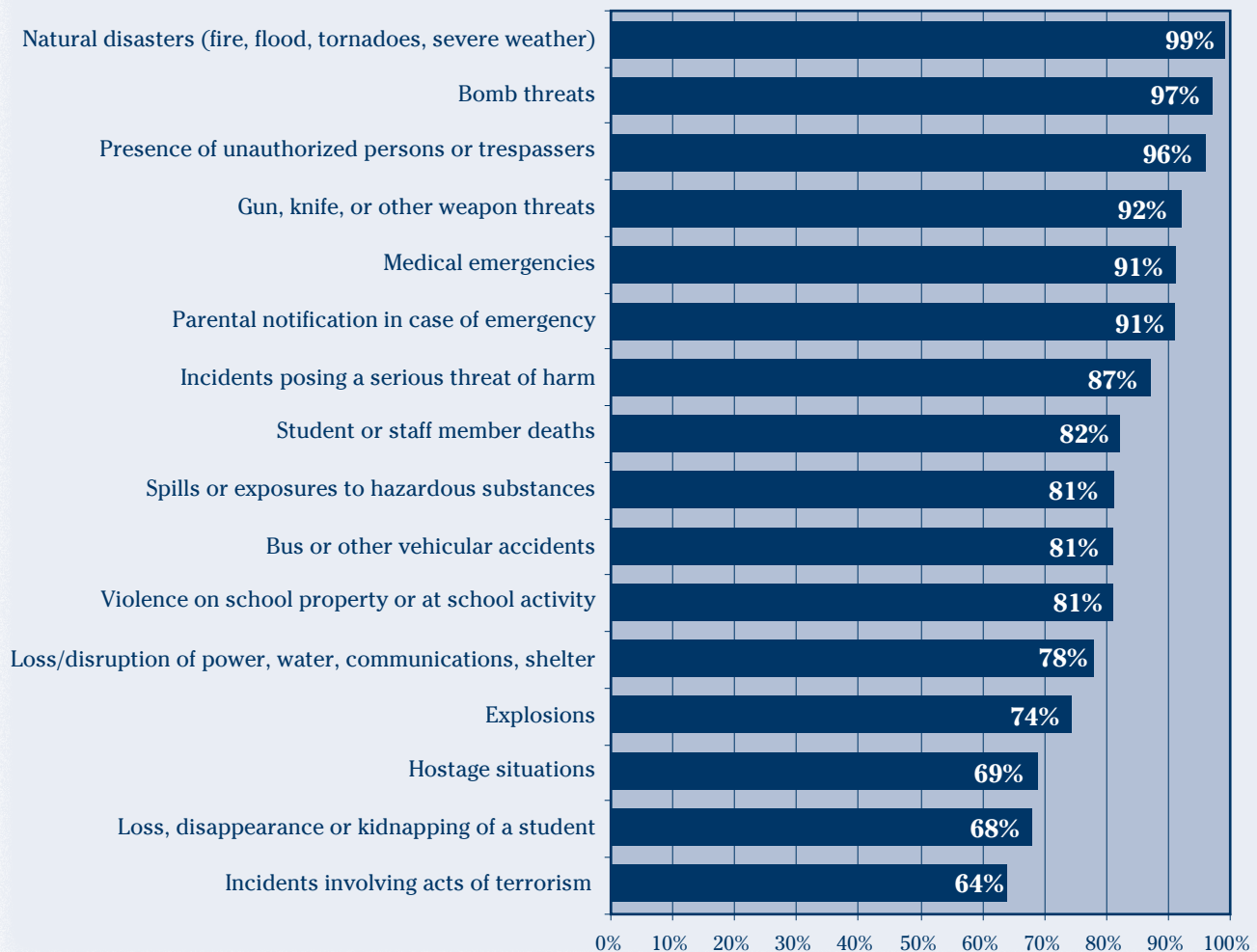
Most schools (95%, or 1,337 of 1,409) have written policies instructing faculty and staff on how to report suspected cases of neglect, abuse, suicidal students, or similarly unsafe circumstances.

Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan (CMP/EMP)

Virginia Code §22.1-279.8 requires all school boards to ensure that their schools develop written school crisis and emergency management plans. The Code section also describes what such plans should generally address.

The survey asked schools whether they have developed such plans and, if so, what they contain. Schools were also asked to indicate those persons who assisted in developing the plans, and those who assist in the review and updating of the plans, as well as implementation and post-activation debriefing.

CHART 10
Specific Content in School CMP/EMP



Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan Content

Schools addressed numerous topics in their CMP/EMP. Chart 10 illustrates the percentage of schools that included each of the listed topics in their plan. (N = 1406)

CMP/EMP Preparation

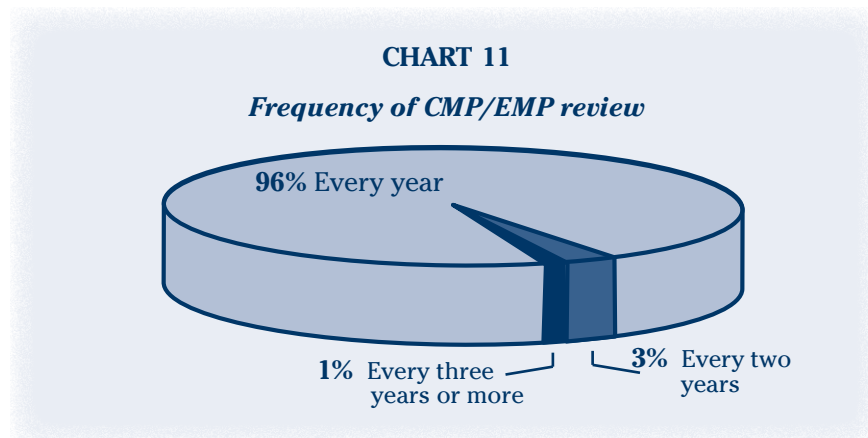
Schools were asked if any outside experts provided assistance in preparing their CMP/EMP. Seventy-seven percent (77%, or 1,067 of 1,394) of the schools reported that they received assistance.

The types of outside experts that assisted the schools in preparing their plans are listed in Table 5, along with the percent of schools that received help from each type. (N = 1,066)

TABLE 5	
<i>Provided Expert Assistance in Preparation of CMP/EMP</i>	
<i>Type of Expert</i>	<i>Percent of Schools</i>
School resource officer (SRO)	69%
Fire official	55%
Local law enforcement officer	53%
Emergency medical staff (EMS)	34%
School security officer (SSO)	27%
Hazmat officials	16%
Crime prevention specialist (CPS)	8%
Private consultant	4%
Private security officer	1%

CMP/EMP Review and Updates

Nearly all the schools surveyed (99%, or 1,387 of 1,403) regularly review and update their school's CMP/EMP. Of these, most schools said they review/update their CMP/EMP every year.



Listed below are the types of persons or groups typically involved in the review/update of the schools' CMPs/EMP. Also shown is the percent of schools that utilize each. (N = 1,386)

<i>Percent of Schools</i>	<i>Reviews/Updates School CMP/EMP</i>
94%	School administrator(s)
60%	School faculty
55%	Committee that created the original CMP/EMP
53%	School staff
41%	School resource officer (SRO)
19%	School security officer (SSO)
17%	Local law enforcement officer
14%	Fire official
9%	Emergency medical staff (EMS)
4%	Hazmat official
2%	Crime prevention specialist (CPS)
1%	Private consultant
1%	Private security officer

CMP/EMP Implementation

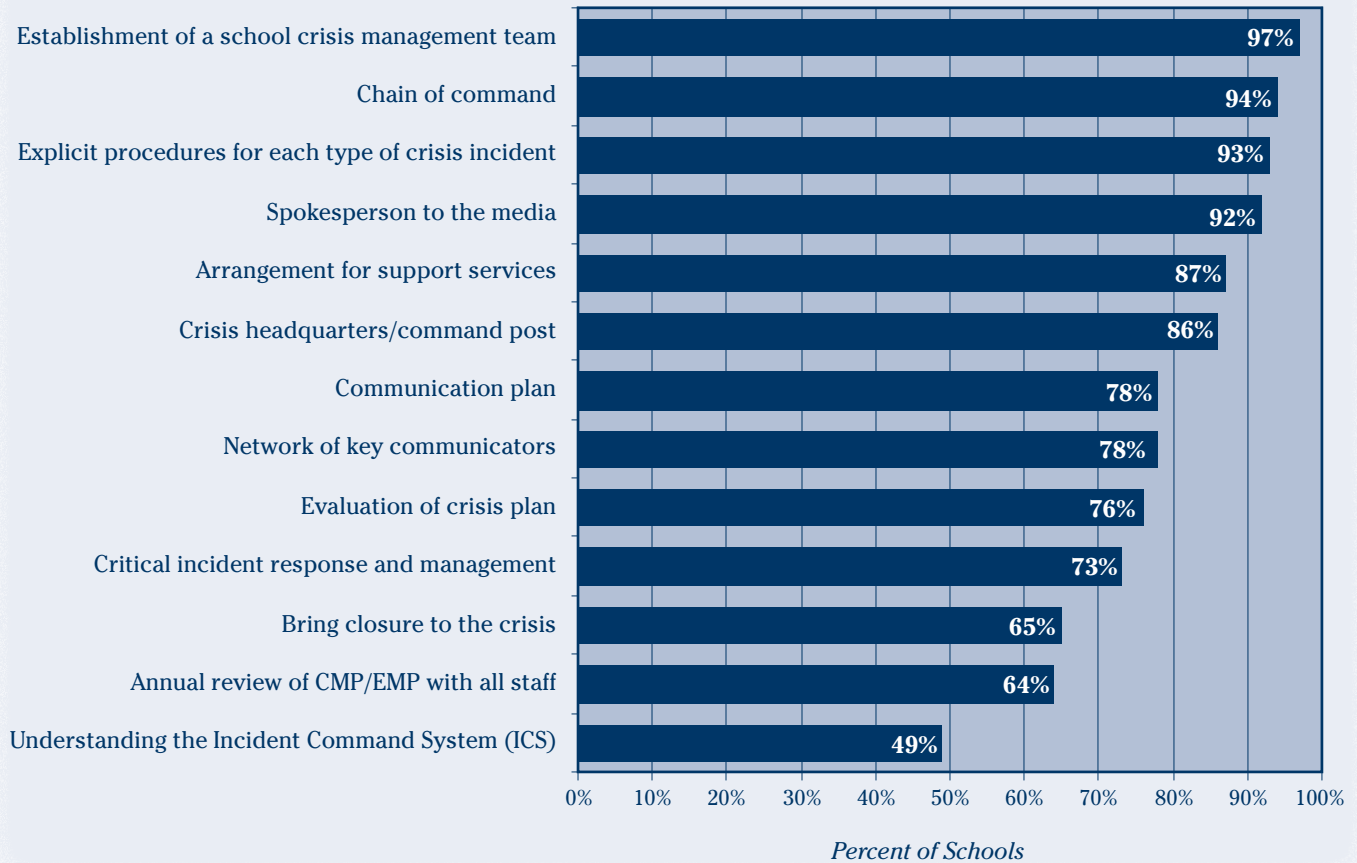
Schools were also asked about the methods they use to implement or practice their school's CMP/EMP. Most said that they implement or practice their plans by training their school administrators, faculty, and staff. Schools also used other methods to implement their plans: (N = 1,409)

- 74% conduct student training/awareness,
- 46% coordinate with first responders (EMS, fire, police, hazmat, etc.),
- 41% conduct tabletop exercises with crisis team members,
- 35% conduct parental training/awareness, and
- 25% conduct a full-scale drill with the crisis team and public safety partners.

Model CMP/EMP Policies

The Virginia Department of Education offers a model CMP for use in developing or refining school division-level and building-level crisis plans. Specific elements from the model CMP/EMP are included in most schools' plans. Schools were asked to indicate which of the model CMP/EMP elements are included in their school's current CMP/EMP. Their responses are detailed in Chart 12. (N = 1,409)

CHART 12

Use of Model CMP/EMP Elements***CMP/EMP Post-Activation Debriefing***

Schools were asked whether their CMP/EMP includes a mandatory debriefing process following any plan activation. Sixty-four percent (64%, or 897 of 1,401) of the schools said they have included a mandatory debriefing process in their CMP/EMP.

Safety Drills and Preparation

Schools were asked about the types and frequency of the drills they practice, as well as some of the details of their drills.

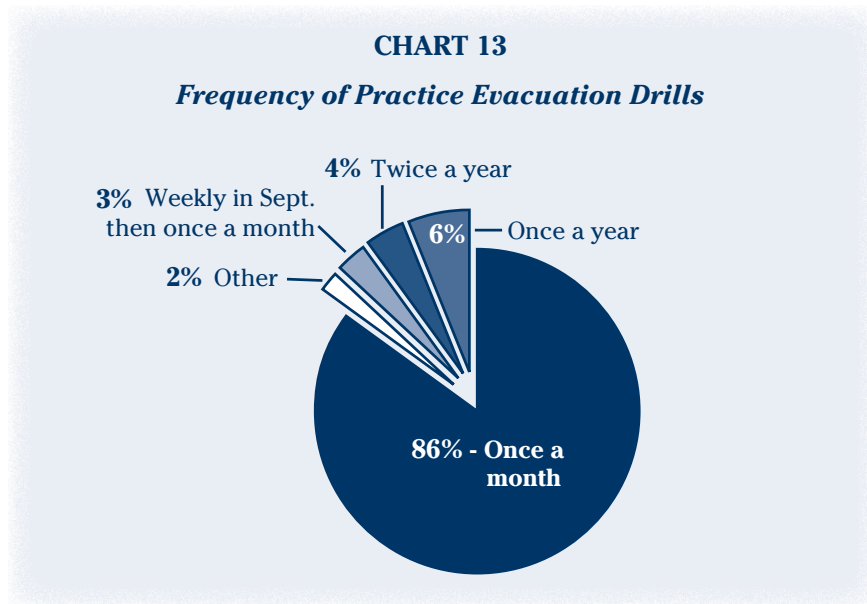
Evacuation Drills

Eighty-six percent (86%, or 1,196 of 1,395) of schools practice evacuation drills once a month during the school year. Others practice these drills with varying regularity, as illustrated in Chart 13. Ten schools said they never practice evacuation drills. Of these, one is an adult education center, however, the rest are elementary, middle, and high schools.

Of the schools that said they regularly held evacuation drills:

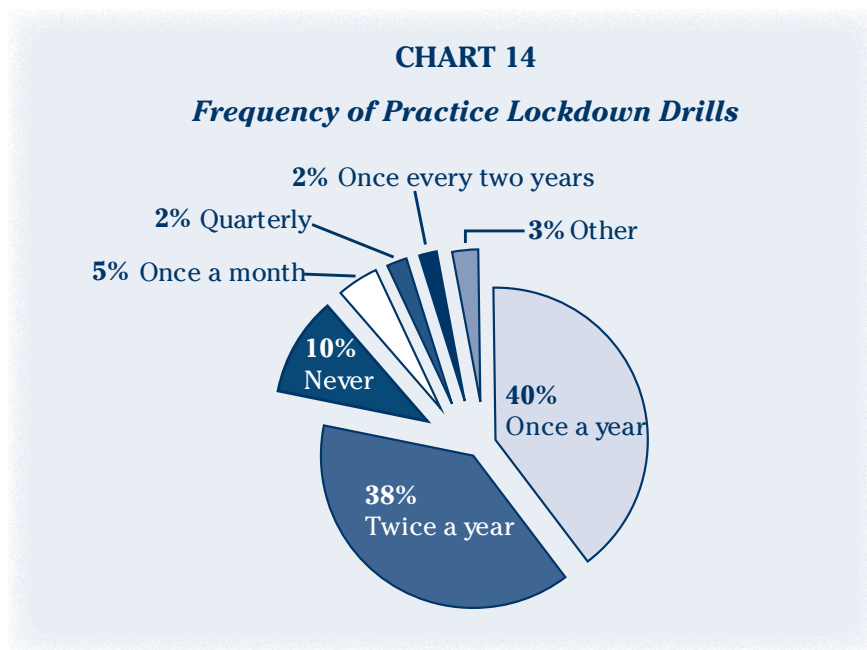
- 89% (1,235 of 1,388) have an off-site facility that can be used as shelter during a school evacuation or they have an agreement with an off-site facility,
- 67% (930 of 1,388) practice clearing their school building by at least 300 yards during evacuation drills, and

- 50% (693 of 1,388) report practicing the same evacuation route every time, and 50% (695 of 1,388) practice differing routes in their evacuation drills.



Lockdown Drills

Schools were asked whether or not they conducted lockdown drills during the school year. Eighty-three percent (83%, or 1,155 of 1,395) of schools stage lockdown drills at least once a year, as shown in Chart 14.



Schools were also asked if they have a method they use to account for all students in case of a school evacuation or lockdown. Nearly all schools (98%, or 1,377 of 1,401) said that they do have such a system in place. An examination of the types of systems or methods used by the schools to account for students in an emergency is planned for the 2006 survey.

National Incident Management System

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help first responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines coordinate more effectively in response to natural disasters and emergencies.

Schools were asked whether their administrators are aware of NIMS and if so, whether or not they have incorporated NIMS key components into their school's CMP/EMP.

- Forty-one percent (41%, or 573 of 1,389) of the schools said that their administrators are aware of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and of these, 87% have incorporated NIMS key components into their school's CMP/EMP.

School Crisis Kit

Schools were also asked whether or not they have a crisis kit that can be taken out of the school in the event of an evacuation (often equipped with a bullhorn, class rosters, blankets, first aid equipment, other communication devices, and the emergency response plan).

- Eighty-five percent (85%, or 1,195 of 1,403) of the schools indicated that they have a crisis kit or similar tool.

Training and Programs

Homeland Security and Domestic Preparedness

Schools were asked about the types of homeland security/domestic preparedness (HS/DP) training or assessments they conducted during the 2004 - 2005 school year. These are typically specialized training used to address potential terrorism threats.

Schools most frequently conducted the following types of training: (N = 1,409)

- 25% conducted chemical/biological attack training,
- 12% conducted explosive attack training,
- 10% conducted radiological/nuclear attack training, and
- 9% conducted weapons of mass destruction (WMD) training.

Administrator, faculty, and staff HS/DP training

Overall, fewer than half of all schools reported that their administrators, faculty, or staff received specialized training in homeland security and domestic preparedness. Forty-seven percent (47%) provided some HS/DP training for their administrators, and 42% provided some HS/DP training for their faculty and staff. (N = 1,316)

Youth-related Law

Schools were asked whether administrators, faculty, and staff who deal specifically with student discipline received training in elements of youth-related law.

- Seventy-seven percent of schools (77%, or 1,070 of 1,395) report that administrators, faculty, and staff received training in youth-related law.

New Safety-related Programs

Schools were asked whether any new safety-related programs were undertaken at their facilities during the 2004 – 2005 school year.

- Thirty-five percent (35%, or 484 of 1,409) of the schools report that a new safety-related initiative or program was established during the 2004 – 2005 school year. The types of new programs and the number and percent of schools that initiated them are listed in Table 6.

TABLE 6		
<i>New Safety-Related Programs Implemented in School Year 2004 – 2005</i>		
<i>Type of Program</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Percent of Schools</i>
DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance and Education)	138	10%
Life Skills	109	8%
GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training)	57	4%
Anti-bullying	46	3%
Security (non-emergency)	39	3%
SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions)	37	3%
Class Action	32	2%
Substance abuse (tobacco, alcohol, drugs)	23	2%
Second Step	21	2%
Youth Crimeline or Crime Stoppers	18	1%
Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders	18	1%
Anti-violence	18	1%
<i>Programs implemented by less than 1% of the schools include: Alternative Education; Character education; Child abuse/neglect; Conflict/peer mediation; Crisis Plan; Danger replaced DARE; De-escalation; Gangs; Internet Safety; Mentorship; Ninth Grade Transition and Jump Start; PALS; Paths to PASS; PATTS; Prevent, Act, Respond; QPR- suicide prevention; Respectful Schools; SAVVY; Suicide Prevention; Tolerance/diversity; Truancy Intervention; Young Negotiators; Youth Court; Youth Crime Watch; and YOVASO.</i>		

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Schools were asked to describe the types of collaborative associations they have with various agencies and groups in their communities, including formal cooperative agreements, relationships with law enforcement, and volunteer programs.

Cooperative Agreements

The agencies with which schools most often have cooperative agreements are law enforcement and social services agencies, followed by the fire, health, mental health, and emergency medical services agencies.

- Fewer than half of the elementary schools (47%), compared with 65% of middle schools and 66% of high schools, have agreements with local law enforcement agencies.

Twenty-nine percent (29%, or 407 of 1,407) of the schools said they have no written cooperative agreements with any type of outside agency.

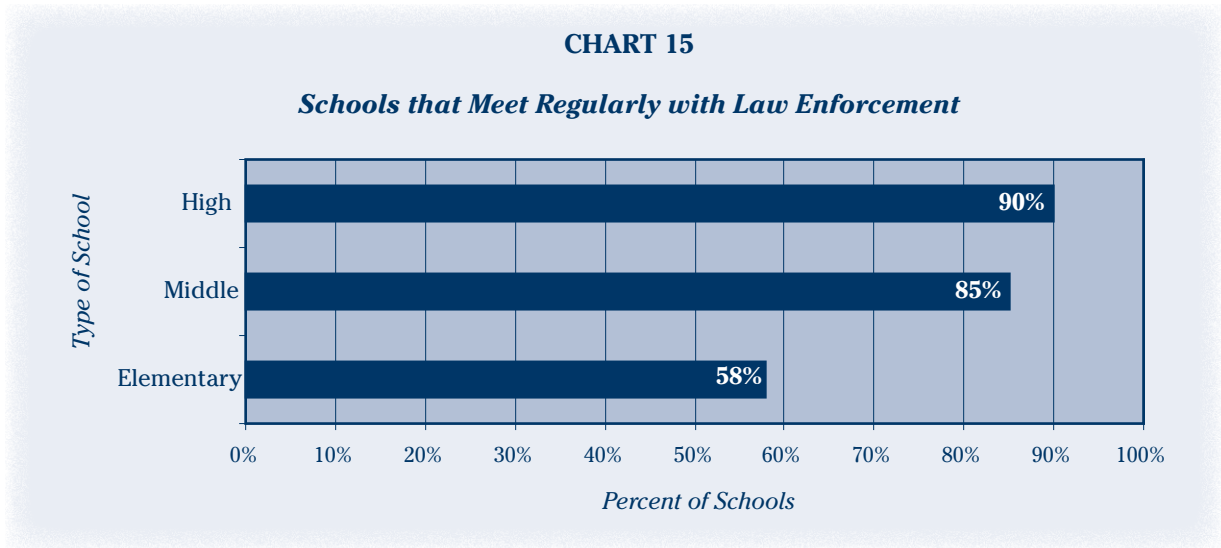
Cooperation with Law Enforcement

Meetings with Local Law Enforcement

Schools were asked to describe the types of working relationships they have with their local law enforcement agencies. Sixty-eight percent (68%, or 950 of 1,399) of schools report that school administrators held regular meetings with local law enforcement to discuss problems in and around their schools. Of these,

- 26% (241 of 932) said their school administrators typically meet with local law enforcement on a weekly basis, and
- 25% (234 of 932) said their school administrators typically meet with local law enforcement on a monthly basis.

Among the three types of schools, a larger percentage of high schools and middle schools report holding regular meetings with local law enforcement than elementary schools (Chart 15).

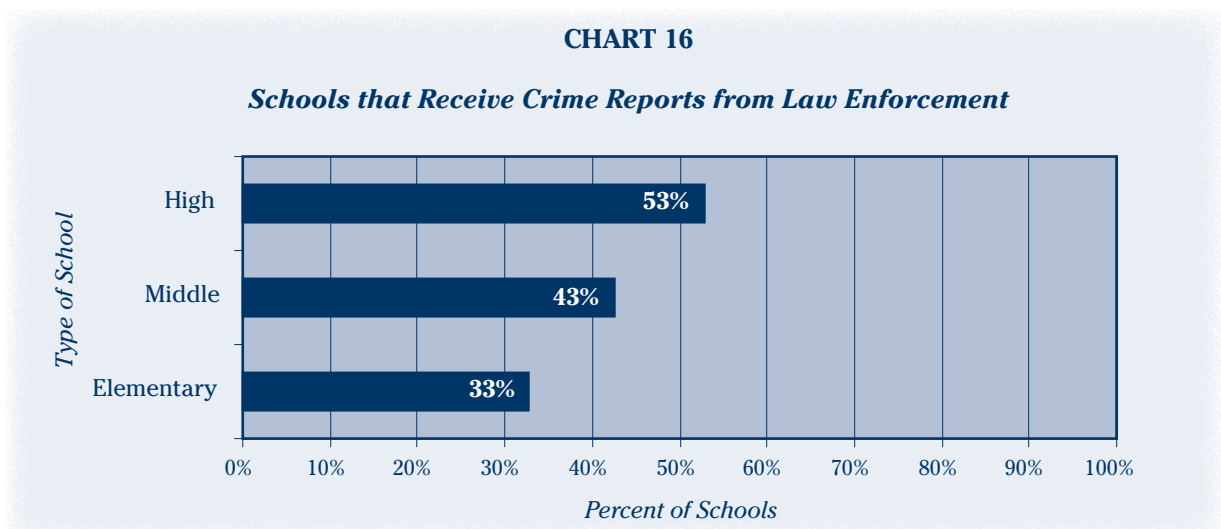


Crime Data Reports from Local Law Enforcement

Schools were asked whether they regularly receive crime data reports from local law enforcement to make them aware of crimes occurring nearby. Forty-one percent (41%, or 571 of 1,398) said that they receive regular crime data reports from local law enforcement. Of these,

- 35% (189 of 535) typically receive reports on a weekly basis, and
- 21% (110 of 535) typically receive reports on a monthly basis.

Among the three types of schools, a greater percentage of high schools receive regular crime data reports from local law enforcement than middle or elementary schools (Chart 16).



Volunteer Programs

Schools were asked whether they have organized volunteer programs. Eighty-four percent of schools, (84%, or 1,179 of 1,405) report having such programs, with more elementary schools having organized volunteer programs than middle or high schools (Table 7).

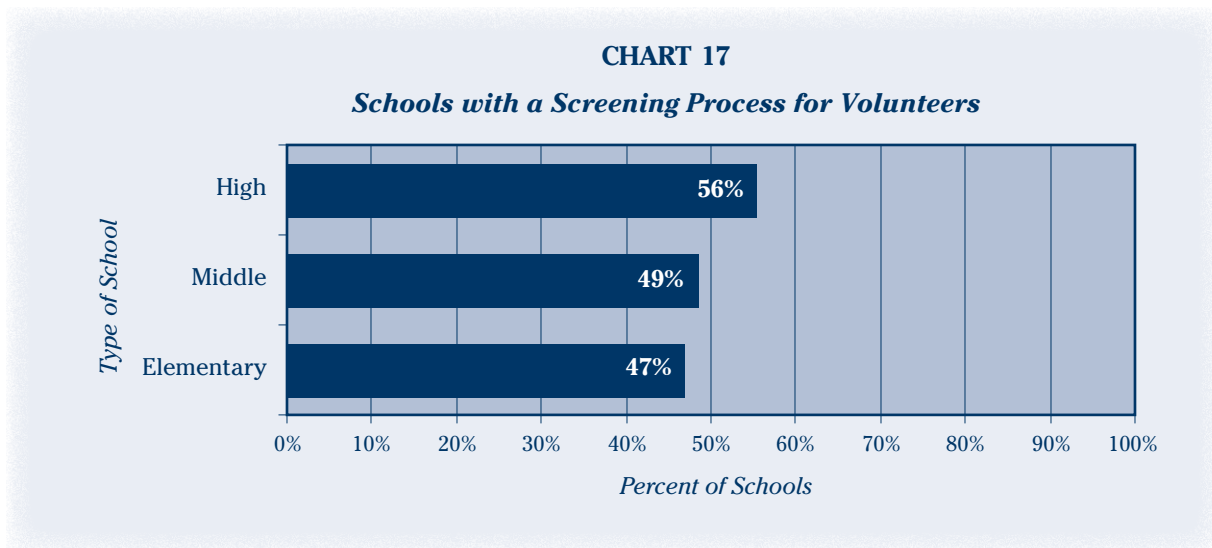
TABLE 7 <i>Schools with an Organized Volunteer Program</i>	
<i>Type of School</i>	<i>Percent of Schools</i>
Elementary	93%
Middle	80%
High	71%

Virginia law requires that all part-time and full-time school employees undergo a criminal history record check. Schools were asked whether they require any type of background check for volunteers.

Of the schools that have organized volunteer programs, 49% (574 of 1,165) said they screen volunteers. Of these:

- 51% of schools use criminal background check,
- 45% of schools use sex offender registry check,
- 40% of schools use reference check, and
- 37% of schools use personal background check.

Despite the fact that a greater percentage of elementary schools have organized volunteer programs, fewer have screening processes in place than do middle and high schools (Chart 17).



SECURITY, SURVEILLANCE, AND MONITORING

The survey asked schools about the types of surveillance and monitoring they use. Questions asked for information about security in specific areas (including entrances, interior and exterior grounds, remote classrooms, etc.), types of alarm systems used, types of visible security presence used, and control and monitoring of visitor access.

Monitoring of Buildings and Grounds

Schools were asked whether they monitor the main entrances of their school buildings at all times during school hours.

- Eighty-five percent (85%, or 1,129 of 1,405) monitor the main entrances of their buildings during school hours. Table 8 shows what monitoring method the schools use.

TABLE 8 <i>Provides Primary Monitoring of School Entrance</i>	
<i>Provides Monitoring</i>	<i>Percent of Schools</i>
Faculty/staff	40%
Administrative staff	25%
Security camera (live, monitored in real time)	22%
Security camera (taped, not monitored in real time)	7%
School security personnel	6%

Security/Surveillance Cameras

Schools were asked whether they use security/surveillance cameras to monitor their school buildings and grounds. A majority responded that they do not use security/surveillance cameras to monitor these areas.

Building exterior:

<i>Use of camera on building exterior</i>	<i>Percent of schools</i>
Does not have an exterior security/surveillance system	65%
Monitored at all times	14%
Taped, not monitored in real time	13%
Monitored during school hours only	7%
Monitored after school hours only	< 1%
No response	< 1%

School interior:

<i>Use of camera on school interior</i>	<i>Percent of schools</i>
Does not have an interior security/surveillance system	61%
Monitored at all times	14%
Taped, not monitored in real time	12%
Monitored during school hours only	9%
Monitored after school hours only	3%
No response	<1%

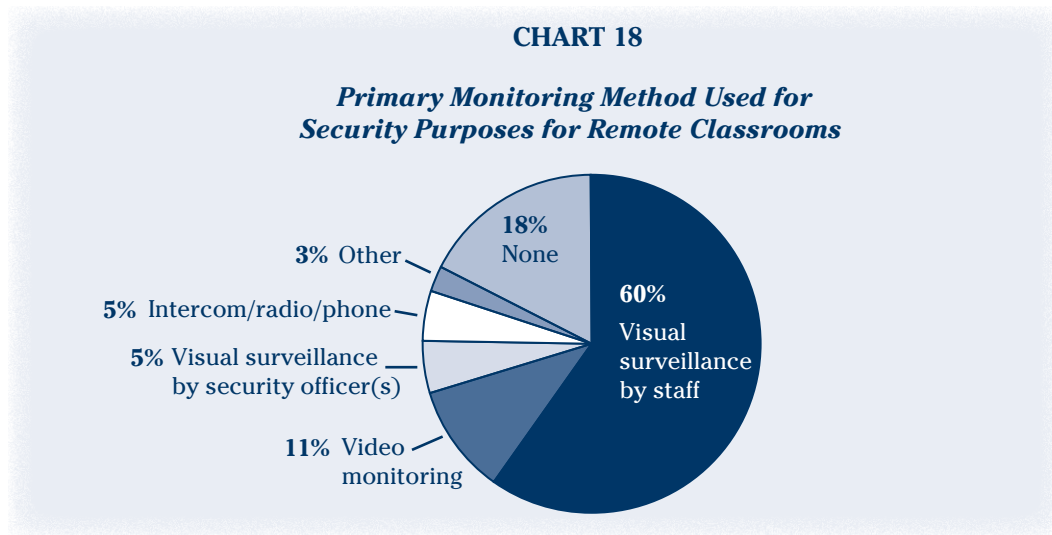
School grounds:

<i>Use of camera on school grounds</i>	<i>Percent of schools</i>
Does not have a security/surveillance system to monitor grounds	67%
Monitored at all times	13%
Taped, not monitored in real time	13%
Monitored during school hours only	5%
Monitored after school hours only	< 1%
No response	1%

Remote Classrooms

Schools were asked whether they use remote classrooms (such as trailers/modular units) that are separate from the main school buildings. Forty-six percent of schools (46%, or 655 of 1,402) use remote classrooms.

Schools using remote classrooms were asked what their primary monitoring method is for maintaining security of the remote classroom(s). Their responses are shown in Chart 18. (N = 645)



Two-way Communication

Schools were asked if they have a two-way communication system in place between their main offices and other areas of the schools.

- Ninety-six percent (96%, or 1,344 of 1,404) have some type of two-way communication system in place. Of these, nearly half (48%) use an intercom system and one-third (36%) use an in-house phone system.

Security Alarm System

Schools were asked how they usually respond when their security alarm system is activated. Of the 80% of schools (1,131 of 1,409) that have a security alarm system, typical responses to activated security alarms are:

- 61% (694 of 1,131) automatically notify local law enforcement,
- 42% (478 of 1,131) follow written procedures in case of alarm, and
- 41% (465 of 1,131) have staff respond first, then contact law enforcement if necessary.

Access Control

Schools were asked how they control access to school buildings and individual classrooms, and how they protect students and personnel.

Entry Points

Nearly all of the schools (98%, or 1,374 of 1,403) report having designated points of entry into their school building or school campus.

Classrooms

Ninety-four percent (94%, or 1,315 of 1,403) of the schools said that individual classrooms could be locked when not in use.

School Visitors

Ninety-eight percent (98%, or 1,381 of 1,403) of the schools have written regulations regarding school visitors. "Visitors" include parents, delivery personnel, etc. who come to the school during normal school hours.

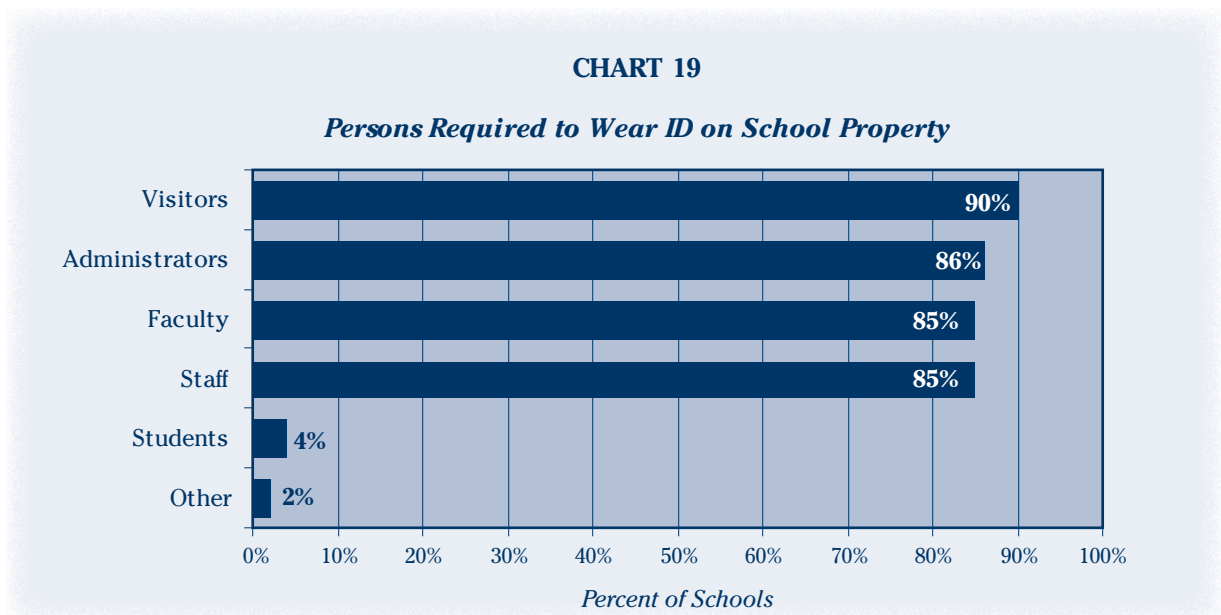
Of those schools that have written regulations regarding school visitors:

- 99% (1,367) require all school visitors to sign in at the school's main office,
- 79% (1,092) require that specific conditions are met before a student is released to the custody of a non-custodial parent/guardian, and
- 24% (335) require visitors show photo identification at the school's main office.

School-issued Identification (ID)

Schools were asked about their use of school-issued ID tags. Ninety-five percent (95%, or 1,344 of 1,409) require visible school-issued ID badges or tags to be worn while on school property.

Persons who are required to wear ID badges, and the percent of schools that require them to do so, are shown in Chart 19. A small minority of schools (5%, or 65 of 1,409) said that they do not require ID tags.



Visible Security Presence

Schools were asked about the types of visible security presence during school hours and at school-related events. Most schools indicated that they have some sort of visible security for both.

During School Hours

Ninety-four percent (94%, or 1,328 of 1,408) of the schools have some sort of visible and regular security presence during school hours.

As shown in Table 9, this “security presence” most commonly consists of school administration personnel, faculty, or staff in lower grades (86% in elementary schools and 41% in middle schools), while only 30% of high schools rely on these personnel for security during school hours.

TABLE 9				
<i>Primary Provider of School Campus Security During School Hours, by Type of School</i>				
<i>Type of Security</i>	<i>Type of School</i>			
	<i>Elem</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Other</i>
Administrator/Faculty/Staff	86%	41%	30%	59%
Law Enforcement Officer, uniformed	<1%	7%	9%	6%
SRO, uniformed	3%	32%	40%	15%
SRO, plain clothes	<1%	3%	5%	4%
SSO, uniformed	2%	9%	8%	5%
SSO, plain clothes	<1%	7%	7%	8%
Private Security Officer, plain clothes	0	0	<1%	0
None	8%	1%	<1%	5%

Additionally, Table 9 shows:

- The primary type of regular, visible security presence on school campuses during school hours differs depending on the type of school.
- School Resource Officers (uniformed or plainclothes) are the primary visible security presence in 44% of high schools and 34% of middle schools.

At School-related Events

Ninety-four percent (94%) of the schools report having some sort of visible and regular security presence at school-related events.

As shown in Table 10, this most often consists of school administration personnel, faculty, or staff in the elementary and middle schools (88% and 66%, respectively), whereas only 39% of the high schools use these types of personnel for security at school events. (N = 1,409)

TABLE 10				
<i>Primary Provider of School Campus Security at School Events, by Type of School</i>				
<i>Type of Security</i>	<i>Type of School</i>			
	<i>Elem</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Other</i>
Administrator/Faculty/Staff	88%	66%	39%	61%
Law Enforcement Officer, uniformed	2%	10%	42%	16%
SRO, uniformed	1%	13%	13%	6%
SRO, plain clothes	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%
SSO, uniformed	<1%	6%	3%	3%
SSO, plain clothes	<1%	2%	1%	7%
Private Security Officer, uniformed	<1%	0	<1%	0
None	7%	1%	0	6%

Additionally, Table 10 shows:

- As is the case during school hours, the primary type of regular, visible security presence on school campuses during school events differs depending on the type of school.
- At high school events, uniformed law enforcement officers are the most frequently used primary visible security presence (42% of schools).

STUDENT CONDUCT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

Communication of Student Code of Conduct

Schools were asked how they communicate the student code of conduct to their students, parents, and faculty and staff.

Students

- Sixty-five percent (65%) ask students to sign and return a form stating they received the code of conduct.
- Nineteen percent (19%) inform students about the code of conduct by reviewing it in class.
- Eleven percent (11%) inform students about the student code of conduct at assemblies/meetings.

Parents

- Ninety-three percent (93%) of schools ask parents to sign/return a form stating they received the student code of conduct.
- Four percent (4%) inform parents about the student code of conduct at assemblies/meetings/PTA.

Faculty and Staff

- Eighty-one percent (81%) of schools teach faculty and staff about the code of conduct at faculty/staff meetings.
- Twelve percent (12%) ask faculty and staff sign and return a form stating they received the student code of conduct.

Parent and Faculty/Staff Relations

Parent Surveys

Fifty-eight percent (58%, or 814 of 1,400) of schools use surveys to ask parents about their school safety concerns. Of these, 62% (501 of 808) said they survey parents once a year.

School Faculty/Staff Surveys

Fewer than half of the schools (45%, or 624 of 1,387) use surveys to ask school faculty/staff about *observed student behavior that concerns them*. Nearly two-thirds (62%, or 867 of 1,393) use surveys to ask school faculty/staff about *their personal safety concerns* in school.

Parental Notification of Emergency

Eighty-eight percent (88%, or 1,226 of 1,400) of schools have written parental notification plans that outline how parents/guardians will be notified in the case of a school crisis or emergency. Of these,

- 86% (1,054 of 1,225) telephone the parents in an emergency,
- 58% (711 of 1,225) depend on media outlets for parental notification, and
- 38% (468 of 1,225) use an electronic notification system.

School Counselor/Psychologist

Ninety-five percent (95%, or 1,332 of 1,399) of schools have a counselor/psychologist designated to work with troubled and/or disruptive students. Of these, 78% (1,024 of 1,322) have counselors/psychologists who work at their schools full-time.

Anonymous Reports/Surveys

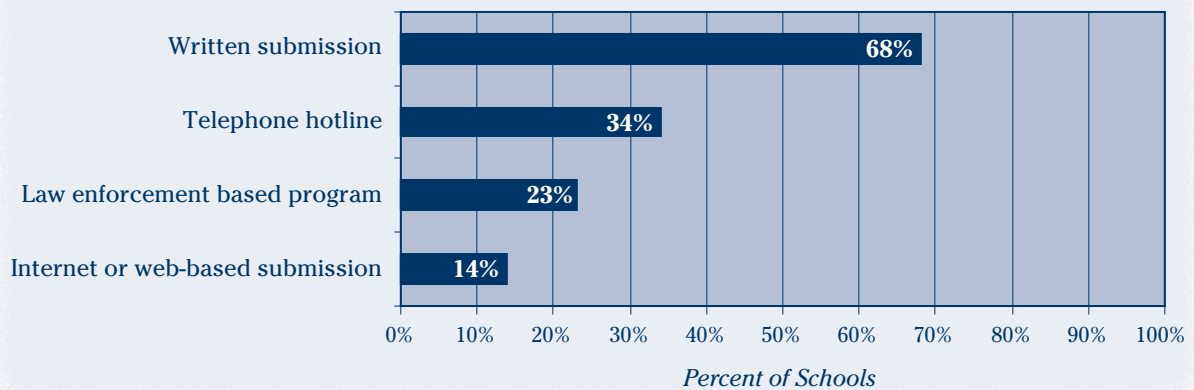
Schools were asked whether they have anonymous reporting programs by which students can report problems/potential dangers to school administrators without identifying themselves.

- Sixty-eight percent (68%, or 952 of 1,401) of schools have specific procedures that permit students to anonymously report problems/potential dangers.

Methods of Anonymous Reporting

The schools with anonymous reporting procedures were asked about type of procedures they use. The most common method used is a written submission (such as a drop box). Other methods used are noted in Chart 20.

CHART 20

Methods of Anonymous Reporting Used by Schools***Frequency of Anonymous Reports***

Schools that have anonymous reporting procedures for students were asked approximately how many anonymous reports they receive each school year. Table 11 shows numbers of anonymous reports submitted by students in the 2004 - 2005 school year.

TABLE 11		
Number of Anonymous Reports Received in School Year 2004 – 2005		
Number of Anonymous Reports	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
0	296	31%
1-5	349	37%
6-10	94	10%
11-20	51	5%
21-40	29	3%
41-60	10	1%
61-100	3	<1%
over 100	5	<1%
Don't know	110	12%

Anonymous Student Surveys

Schools were asked whether they have anonymous student survey programs that ask students about their school safety concerns.

Fewer than half of the schools (45%, or 635 of 1,400) use an anonymous survey. Of these,

- 70% (437 of 625) survey their students once a year,
- 22% (137 of 625) survey their students once every two years or more, and
- 6% (35 of 625) survey their students twice a year.

Although many schools conduct anonymous surveys, there is very little consistency among the types of surveys. Of the schools that conduct anonymous student surveys, 63% use their own surveys developed “in-house.”

School Climate

Threat Assessments

Schools were asked whether they use a formal threat assessment process in responding to student threats of violence.

- Just over half, 55% (765 of 1,397) report that they use a formal threat assessment process in response to student threats. Most reported conducting fewer than five threat assessments during the 2004 – 2005 schools year. (N = 731)

TABLE 12		
<i>Threats Assessed in School Year 2004 – 2005</i>		
<i>Number of Threats Assessed</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Percent of Schools</i>
0 - 4	541	74%
5 - 9	115	16 %
10 - 14	40	6%
15 - 19	11	2%
20 - 24	10	1%
25 +	5	<1%

Truancy

Schools were asked whether they have a method for determining why some students are habitually truant (i.e., fear for safety, substance abuse, etc.).

- Ninety-one percent (91%, or 1,277 of 1,398) of schools reported that they do. These methods will be examined in more detail in the 2006 school survey.

Gangs in School

Schools were asked whether they had identified any recognizable gangs/gang members among their student populations during the 2004 - 2005 school year.

- Eleven percent (11%, or 157 of 1,404) of the schools report that they identified recognizable gangs/gang members among their student population.

Gangs and school type:

- Of the 157 schools that reported identifying gang members among their student populations, 43% (68) are high schools, 28% (44) are middle schools, 9% (14) are elementary schools, and 20% (31) are “other” types of schools (such as combined, alternative, vocational/technical, etc.).

Gangs and school location:

- Of the 157 schools that reported identifying gang members among their student populations, 58% (91) are located in suburban areas, 28% (44) are located in urban areas, 10% (16) are located in rural areas and 4% (6) are in other types of settings.

Racist or Hate-related Incidents

Schools were asked if they had identified any racist or hate-related language/symbols in graffiti found on school property during school year 2004 – 2005.

- Seventeen percent (17%, or 243 of 1,393) of the schools reported identifying racist or hate-related language/symbols.
- Nearly the same number of schools (18%, or 250 of 1,396) reported identifying racist or hate-related comments in witness statements from incident investigations during school year 2004 – 2005.

VI. FUTURE WORK

Topics for Examination in the Upcoming Year

The mission of the 2005 Virginia School Safety Survey was to provide initial baseline information on school safety planning and practices to guide future VCSS safety surveys and safety audit activities. We cannot develop concrete recommendations for changes in school safety planning or practices based on this early information. We hope that the data collected in subsequent surveys will allow us to further examine trends and patterns among school safety practices and will allow us to make recommendations that will help make Virginia's schools safer.

However, this year's findings do suggest that certain areas require further attention. The VCSS will examine these areas in more detail during the coming year to determine if they merit suggestions or recommendations for improvement:

- ***Student tracking/parental notification systems used by schools in emergency situations***

Most schools have a process in place for notifying parents in the case of emergencies at the schools. However, the nature of these processes is unclear, and it is unknown whether commonly used systems such as telephone notification would be effective in cases requiring a sudden, mass notification of parents. The VCSS will examine the types of systems in place and their potential effectiveness.

- ***Volunteer screening processes used by schools***

Although Virginia law requires all school *employees* to undergo criminal background checks, fewer than 50% of elementary and middle schools, and only about 55% of high schools, require background checks of *volunteers* working in schools. The VCSS will examine the need for volunteer screening processes, and the number and types of screening processes, to determine if any recommendations are appropriate.

- ***Incorporation of homeland security issues in school safety plans, policies and practices***

Less than 50% of schools require their personnel to receive training in homeland security/domestic preparedness issues. However, it is unclear how training for issues designated as "homeland security/domestic preparedness" overlaps with existing training for dealing with more "conventional" emergency situations. The VCSS will examine this issue and determine if any recommendations are appropriate.

- ***Evacuation and lockdown drills***

About 10% of schools reported that they do not practice annual lockdown drills. Additionally, there may be clarification needed to distinguish between evacuation procedures in place for fire drills and evacuations for other types of emergencies.

- ***Controlling access to school buildings***

More information is needed on how divisions and schools identify and define "designated entry points" and how and when the schools monitor these points. Additionally, procedures for numbering entrances and exits for first responders may require further examination. The VCSS will examine this issue and determine if any recommendations are appropriate.

- ***Sharing information between school divisions and law enforcement***

About 60% of school divisions share Discipline, Crime and Violence reports with their local law enforcement agencies, and about 50% of divisions regularly receive local crime reports from law enforcement. The VCSS will examine this area and determine if any recommendations are appropriate regarding the level and frequency of information sharing.

- ***Communication within the schools***

Most divisions (80%) require schools to have two-way communication between their offices and other areas of the schools. Further information is needed about the levels and types of communication between other school areas such as recreational areas, buses, etc. The VCSS will examine this issue.

- ***School surveys of student safety concerns***

Virginia Code §22.1-279.8(A) states that school safety audits should address and evaluate student safety concerns. About 45% of schools reported that they conduct anonymous surveys of students to gather information about how students perceive safety in the schools. However, many different types of surveys are used and 63% of schools use student surveys that they developed on their own. The VCSS will examine current student survey practices and determine if any recommendations for improvements or consistency are needed.

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